

Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs):

What are RWIs?

RWIs are caused by germs **spread** by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols of, or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, hot tubs, water parks, water play areas, interactive fountains, lakes, rivers, or oceans.

What Illnesses do RWIs Cause?

RWIs can cause diarrhea, skin, ear and eye infections, lung infections, wound infections and infections of the spine and brain.

Prevention Tips for Swimmers:

1. **Don't swim** when you have diarrhea. You can pass germs to others in the water.
2. **Don't swallow** pool water, and avoid getting it in your mouth.
3. **Practice good hygiene.** Shower with soap and wash your hands before swimming. Germs on your body end up in the water.
4. Ensure that pools and hot tubs are maintained properly to reduce RWIs. For tips and suggestions visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/triple-a-healthy-swimming.html>.

How Can I Learn More?

1. Read RWI **fact sheets** on DHEC's website.
2. Get **news updates** on water quality and beach advisories at <http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/water/swim.htm>.
3. Receive **free** pool test strips from: <http://www.healthypools.org/freeteststrips/>.

FACT:

It can take chlorine from a few hours to a few days to kill germs!

Some causes of RWIs:

Bacteria:

Legionella
Shigella
Vibrio

Parasites:

Cryptosporidium
Giardia
Naegleria fowleri



Information from this fact sheet, as well as additional information is available from:
CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/>



South Carolina Department of Health
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